

Teacher Notes

Themes

- Australian plants and animals
- Australian culture

Key learning outcomes

- Explore different habitats in Australia and the many different plant and animal species
- Learn how different families celebrate their traditions and connect these to their own family traditions

Key curriculum areas

- **Science:** Science Understanding (Biological sciences); Science Inquiry
- **English:** Language; Literature
- **Maths:** Measurement
- **HASS:** History; Geography

Publication details

Christmas Wild

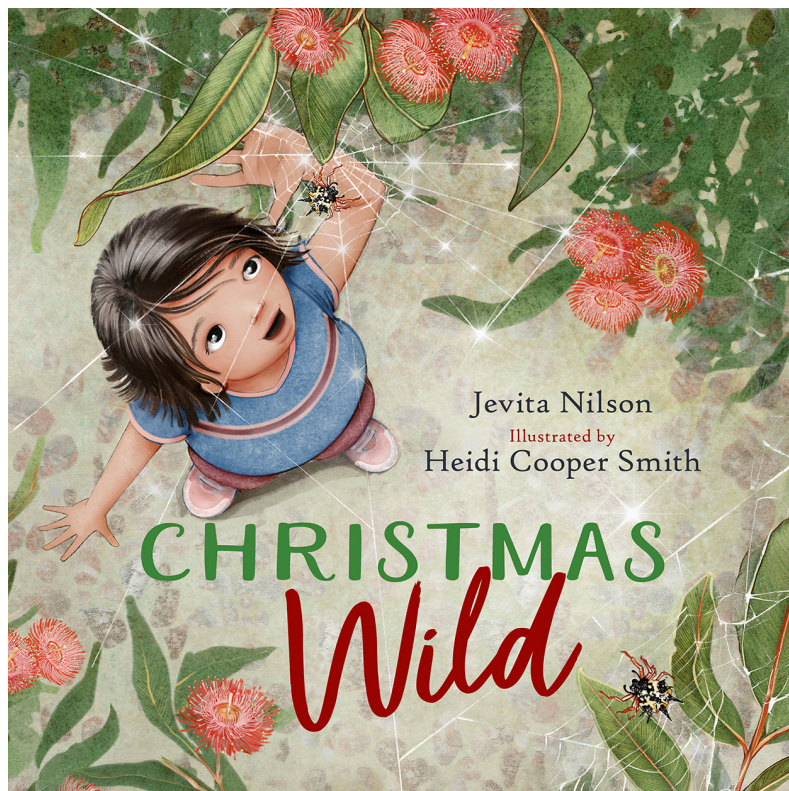
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Christmas Wild

Jevita Nilson and Heidi Cooper Smith

About the book

Christmas is Rosie's favourite time of year. She loves the presents, the tree, the twinkling lights! So, when it's time to pack away the decorations, Rosie wishes she could bring Christmas with her on the family camping trip. But her disappointment soon turns to joy when she learns there are plenty of Christmas surprises to be discovered in nature all year round.

Christmas Wild explores Australian flora and fauna species with a Christmas connection, from Christmas spiders and mistletoebirds, to native Christmas trees and festive flowers – there is so much to celebrate!

Recommended for

Readers aged 5 to 9 (Years 1 to 4)



PUBLISHING

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About the author and illustrator

Jevita Nilson is a children's author with a love for nature, words and all things wondrous. Based in Perth, she writes heartfelt lyrical fiction and non-fiction picture books to inspire curious kids. She is also the author of *Our World Full of Wonder* and *Our World of Wild Wonders* available from CSIRO Publishing.

Heidi Cooper Smith has always held a love and fascination for animals, particularly those that could be found in her own backyard. She is the author and illustrator of many beautiful books, including *Hatch* (CSIRO Publishing) featuring Australia's amazing egg-laying animals.

Pre-reading questions or activities

This is a story about how one person and their family celebrate a special day over the summer holidays. She is celebrating Christmas. Do you have a special day that your family celebrates and spends time together? What does this day look like for you? *(For example, Christmas, Easter, Lunar New Year, Diwali, Eid. Support students to share ideas about what days they celebrate and what things they may do. Get students to draw a picture and write about a day that they celebrate. Students can then share their drawings and discuss differences and similarities about these special days.)*

Discussion questions

Science

1. When it is December, it is summer in Australia. What are some things that happen in summer? *(It's hotter, there's less rain, flowers are in bloom and will turn into fruit, daylight is longer)*
2. When the family drives to the bush, they see many living things. Which ones do you remember from the story? *(For example, Western Australian Christmas trees in bloom, Christmas spiders, red flowering gums and humans)*

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3. Name some things that all living things need to survive. (*Oxygen (air), water, energy (food), an environment that is the correct temperature*)
4. Towards the end of the book, the family is sitting outside watching the stars. What are the non-living, living and once-living things you can see in the picture? (*Non-living things: plastic water bottle, plates, bowl, cutlery, cup, Christmas lights, tree decorations and stars. Living things: humans, dog and grass. Once-living things: decking, Christmas tree, popcorn, paper on the Christmas cracker, cotton in clothing, timber cladding on the house*)

English

1. The story is written from Rosie's point of view. How can you tell this from reading the text? (*Use of the pronouns 'I' and 'my'*)

Maths

1. This book discusses Christmastime in Australia. What month do you think it occurs in? (*December*)
What season is it in Australia during this time? (*Summer*)

HASS

1. The waratah (state emblem of New South Wales) and the black swan (state emblem of Western Australia) are two emblems that represent Australia. Why do we have emblems to represent us? What is the cultural importance of these symbols? (*As people we want to feel connected to each other. Emblems remind us that we are in the same community. Emblems and symbols are often chosen because they are unique to that place or to the people that live there and remind them of that community.*)
2. When it's time to decorate the Christmas tree at Aunt Sadie's, Rosie places decorations on the Wollemi pine. Why do you think she has chosen items such as sea stars and crabs to decorate the tree? (*The items on the tree remind her of the places she has visited, and they are important to her*)
Is there anything in your life that reminds you of important people, places or times?

Activities

Science

Living, non-living, once-living – Year 1

Producer, consumer, decomposer – Year 4

Scientists like to put things into categories. Choose some things from the book that students can sort into categories. Year 1 looks at things that are living, non-living and once-living, and Year 4 looks at things that are producers (can make their own energy, e.g. plants), consumers (must eat food for energy) and decomposers (break down once-living things). Below is a list of items from the book to help you.

Living	Non-living	Once-living	Producers	Consumers	Decomposers
Black swan Waratah Crab Beetle King-parrot	Plastic bottle Plant pots Camera Binoculars Phone	Fallen branch Cardboard box Fallen leaves Wooden table	Christmas tree Kangaroo paw Red flowering gum Christmas bells Orange immortelle	Mistletoebird Sea star Christmas spider King-parrot Humans	Ruby bonnets Christmas tree Worms Christmas beetle

Life cycles – Year 3

Students can create a diagram of a life cycle of one of the organisms in the book. In pairs, students choose an organism and research its life cycle. They then create a poster about the life cycle of their organism. Students can draw or print pictures to glue onto their poster and label the different stages in its life cycle.

Food chains – Year 4

Organisms live in an environment where their needs are met. All organisms must get their energy from somewhere. Producers can convert sunlight into a food energy that they can then use. Consumers must eat other organisms to get this energy, and this is known as a food chain. Students can create a food chain for one of the habitats in the book, and draw a picture for each organism.

For example:

In the bush, Western Australian Christmas trees are producers, small insects eat their leaves and these insects are eaten by Christmas spiders, which in turn are eaten by birds. The food chain would look like this:

Western Australian Christmas tree → small insects → Christmas spiders → birds

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HASS

Finding places in Australia – Years 2 and 3

The book mentions Christmas Island. This is one of the many territories of Australia. Using an online map (Google maps), show students where Christmas Island is. Discuss that Australia has six states and many territories, one being Christmas Island. However, there are two main territories: Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory.

On a printout of a map of Australia, get students to colour the six different states, NT and ACT. Then draw and label where Christmas Island is and some of the other island territories around Australia. Students can label where they live on the map as well.

Emblems of Australia – Years 2 and 3

The book depicts some of the emblems of the Australian states and territories. The waratah is the floral emblem of New South Wales, and the black swan is the bird emblem of Western Australia. Using the two website pages below, ask students to investigate the other floral and faunal emblems of Australia.

Floral emblems: <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/science-research/abrs/publications/posters/floral-emblems-australia>

Faunal emblems: <https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/nature-wildlife/2014/08/australias-animal-fauna-emblems/>

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Christmas Wild Word Search

Name: _____

The words in the box at the bottom are the words you are trying to find in the word search grid. There are no spaces between words in the word search, and words can be forwards, backwards or diagonal. Answers are on the next page.

H	R	T	B	W	R	Y	U	N	M	P	C	K	Q	A
F	R	C	Y	N	I	M	O	L	E	C	R	T	V	A
B	R	Y	S	W	A	N	S	U	N	I	A	M	O	L
P	W	L	G	H	W	L	J	T	V	D	B	E	B	W
N	A	T	E	A	L	B	Y	U	B	E	E	T	L	E
M	R	K	O	E	P	L	I	U	H	T	F	R	E	D
V	A	C	B	W	Q	A	E	X	R	T	V	Y	B	U
N	T	H	I	K	O	L	P	K	M	G	Y	R	F	V
B	A	N	M	U	M	U	G	I	A	E	R	S	D	E
L	H	K	J	H	G	F	D	S	A	Q	E	W	E	R
T	Y	U	W	U	I	O	P	L	K	H	D	G	F	D
S	A	Z	O	C	V	B	N	M	L	K	I	H	G	F
A	E	I	R	O	U	Y	B	F	T	G	P	J	Y	N
O	P	L	M	B	R	A	T	S	A	E	S	T	R	V
Q	E	R	T	G	B	D	Y	N	G	I	O	J	H	F

SWAN

BEETLE

BELLS

GUM

CRAB

WARATAH

SEASTAR

WORM

SPIDER

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Word search answers

H	R	T	B	W	R	Y	U	N	M	P	C	K	Q	A
F	R	C	Y	N	I	M	O	L	E	C	R	T	V	A
B	R	Y	S	W	A	N	S	U	N	I	A	M	O	L
P	W	L	G	H	W	L	J	T	V	D	B	E	B	W
N	A	T	E	A	L	B	Y	U	B	E	E	T	L	E
M	R	K	O	E	P	L	I	U	H	T	F	R	E	D
V	A	C	B	W	Q	A	E	X	R	T	V	Y	B	U
N	T	H	I	K	O	L	P	K	M	G	Y	R	F	V
B	A	N	M	U	M	U	G	I	A	E	R	S	D	E
L	H	K	J	H	G	F	D	S	A	Q	E	W	E	R
T	Y	U	W	U	I	O	P	L	K	H	D	G	F	D
S	A	Z	O	C	V	B	N	M	L	K	I	H	G	F
A	E	I	R	O	U	Y	B	F	T	G	P	J	Y	N
O	P	L	M	B	R	A	T	S	A	E	S	T	R	V
Q	E	R	T	G	B	D	Y	N	G	I	O	J	H	F

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Australian Curriculum Links (Version 9.0)

Year level	Learning area: Science	Other learning areas
Year 1	Science Understanding: Biological sciences - Identify the basic needs of plants and animals, including air, water, food or shelter, and describe how the places they live meet those needs (AC9S1U01) Science Understanding: Earth and space sciences - Describe daily and seasonal changes in the environment and explore how these changes affect everyday life (AC9S1U02)	English: Language: Language for expressing and developing ideas - Understand that words can represent people, places and things (nouns, including pronouns), happenings and states (verbs), qualities (adjectives) and details such as when, where and how (adverbs) (AC9E1LA07) Maths: Measurement - Describe the duration and sequence of events using years, months, weeks, days and hours (AC9M1M03)
Year 2	Science Inquiry: Questioning and predicting Pose questions to explore observed simple patterns and relationships and make predictions based on experiences (AC9S2I01)	Maths: Measurement - Identify the date and determine the number of days between events using calendars (AC9M2M03) HASS: History - A local individual, group, place or building and the reasons for their importance, including social, cultural or spiritual significance (AC9HS2K01) HASS: Geography - How places can be spatially represented in geographical divisions from local to regional to state/territory, and how people and places are interconnected across those scales (AC9HS2K03)
Year 3	Science Understanding: Biological sciences Compare characteristics of living and non-living things and examine the differences between the life cycles of plants and animals (AC9S3U01)	English: Literature: Engaging with and responding to literature - Discuss connections between personal experiences and character experiences in literary texts and share personal preferences (AC9E3LE02) HASS: History - Significant events, symbols and emblems that are important to Australia's identity and diversity, and how they are celebrated, commemorated or recognised in Australia, including Australia Day, Anzac Day, NAIDOC Week, National Sorry Day, Easter, Christmas, and other religious and cultural festivals (AC9HS3K02) HASS: Geography - The representation of contemporary Australia as states and territories, and as the Countries/ Places of First Nations Australians prior to colonisation, and the locations of Australia's neighbouring regions and countries (AC9HS3K03)
Year 4	Science Understanding: Biological sciences Explain the roles and interactions of consumers, producers and decomposers within a habitat and how food chains represent feeding relationships (AC9S4U01)	English: Language: Language for expressing and developing ideas Understand that punctuation signals dialogue through quotation marks and that dialogue follows conventions for the use of capital letters, commas and boundary punctuation (AC9E4LA12)

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Related books from CSIRO Publishing

For younger readers:

- *Hatch* (<https://www.publishing.csiro.au/book/8159>)
- *I'm Not Afraid of Spiders* (<https://www.publishing.csiro.au/book/8173>)
- *Look, See, Find Me* (<https://www.publishing.csiro.au/book/8211>)
- *Our World of Wild Wonders* (<https://www.publishing.csiro.au/book/8176>)
- *Where Are All the Christmas Beetles?* (<https://www.publishing.csiro.au/book/8140>)

For older readers:

- *Plantabulous! More A to Z of Australian Plants* (<https://www.publishing.csiro.au/book/8103>)
- *This Bird: Noticing Our Urban Birds* (<https://www.publishing.csiro.au/book/8166>)

Other CSIRO resources

CSIRO has developed and delivered a broad range of high-quality STEM education programs and initiatives for nearly 40 years. Our programs aim to inspire the pursuit of further STEM education among students and the community, to equip the emerging workforce with tomorrow's skill sets, and to strengthen collaboration between industry and classrooms across Australia. For more information visit: <https://www.csiro.au/en/Education>